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A
S E R M O N

Preached at the
PARISH CHURCH

O F
D E A L,

October 15th, 1752.

By HERBERT RANDOLPH M. A.
Rector of the said Parish, sometime Fellow
of *All-Souls College, Oxford.*

Published at the Request of the MAYOR and
CORPORATION.

We can do nothing against the Truth, but for the truth.
2 Cor. 13. 8.

*Te vero, sanctissime Jesu, aterni Patris co-aeternum
Verbum, — supplex veneror, ut huic labori meo, — mea-
que imbecillitati, — subvenire atque opitulari digneris.*
Bull. Def. Fidei Nicænæ.

O X F O R D,

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Church-Yard, London; and T. SMITH in Canterbury.

M D C C L I I I.

Imprimatur,

J. BROWNE,

Vice-Can. Oxon.

Dec. 16. 1752.

P R E F A C E.

To the Worshipful
The MAYOR and CORPORATION
Of DEAL.

Gentlemen,

I*t is in compliance with your earnest Intreaty that I now commit to the Press what was never intended for the Perusal of the Publick, being penn'd amidst a great number of Avocations, interrupted by Hindrances of several Kinds, particularly by a domestick Affliction, and that too aggravated by the Interrogatories of one, who, if at any time, most certainly at that Time, had no right to trouble me with his Letters.*

A Sermon in its Composition so often interrupted and laid aside, and after such unwelcome Intervals resumed, I might well be unwilling to offer to publick View, did not your Importunity, and the Reasons you give prevail with me.

You, the whole Body of you, had been unworthily treated and abused in an ^a Anonymous Letter. — Who, or what, the Author is, I have no concern. But with his Abuse of Scripture, with his opposing the Divinity of our Saviour, with his urging a few Texts of Scripture, which to his Thinking seem'd to clash with it, and thus endeavouring to undermine your Faith, with this I have to do, in this I am warmly concern'd, and shall, as long as I have Life and Breath left in me, to the utmost of my Ability contend against.

One of those Texts of Scripture, which he dwelt most upon, I endeavour'd in this Sermon of mine to rescue from his perverse Interpretation. If it was to your Satisfaction, if it gave you in short a reasonable account of it, and such as is made plain to every Understanding, I had my End and the only End I shall ever aim at in preaching to you. But,

^a A Letter to the Mayor and Corporation of Deal in Kent, in relation to their opinion on the Trinity.

P R E F A C E.

as you judge it proper, and necessary, it should be printed, that the *Antidote* may spread, and be as common and diffusive, as the *Poison* was, I acquiesce, tho' not without some Inconvenience to myself.

Ye are my Witnesses how little desirous I am of handling the Pen of Controversy. My Way from my Youth up most of you well know, and that, when I came first among you, my Discourses were altogether Practical, and my whole Aim and Application was to admonish and exhort you to live as becomes the Gospel of Christ, that whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, — pure, — lovely or of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, ye might think on these things. And as ye received of us, how ought ye to walk and to please God, so that ye might abound more and more in all Holy Conversation and Godliness, and that all things might be done to Edifying, especially in the Publick Service of Almighty God, I set forth the Excellency of our Liturgy to that purpose; I went through the whole Book of Psalms, explaining, as I went along, the obsolete Words, and obscure Passages in the Old Version. And after a few Catechetical Lectures by way of Introduction, I laid down a Plan to myself of explaining the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and

and the Ten Commandments, thinking to comprehend in this Scheme whatever was necessary for a Christian to know and practise. My Discourses on the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments were so well received and approved of among you, that I have more than once repeated and inculcated them to you. As to an Exposition on the Creed I laid my Intent aside, thinking there was no need to teach you again which be the First Principles of the Oracles of God. So that, except in one short Catechetical Lecture, and one Discourse on the Creeds in General, I have not professedly dwelt upon and explained the Prime Articles of our Christian Faith, unless occasionally, as the Three Great Festivals called upon me to do.

But since in the mean while the Enemy hath been sowing Tares, since the Arian Heresy hath been long covertly introduced, and now openly vented among you, since there are grievous Wolves enter'd in, not sparing the Flock, whose Word eateth like a Canker, I shall not cease to warn every one, as is my Duty, of such erroneous and strange Doctrine, and admonish and exhort you to contend earnestly for the Faith which was once deliver'd unto the Saints.

To this End and Purpose I have already given you the positive Proofs of our Lord's Divinity, and have begun and shall go on to prove it from the Divine Attributes and Operations ascribed to him, from his creating, his redeeming us, his satisfying for our Sins; I have begun and shall go on to shew that the Word which was made Flesh the same was in the Beginning with God; that he was, as our Church speaks (Artic. 2d) the very Eternal God, that if, we compare Scripture with Scripture, and the Writings of the Prophets with those of the Apostles and Evangelists, we shall clearly see that the Union of the Human Nature with the Divine was such, that the Properties and Affections of the one are often interwoven with the other so as in common Speech to be spoken, as of one Person. Even the Sufferings and Wounds and Bruises of the Manhood are transferr'd to the Godhead. He that was pierced on the Cross was Jehovah; He that was crucified was the Lord of Glory; He that bought us was the most High Lord, He that purchased his Church was God, and the Price he paid for it was his own Blood, as St. Paul tells us, Acts 20, 28. and according to the same Apostle, that of the Jews as concerning the Flesh Christ came, who is over all God Blessed for ever.

Bre-

Brethren my hearty Desire and Prayer to God for you is that ye may be saved in Christ Jesus, and that as ye have Believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God, ye would keep the Faith of Christ whole and undefiled. And may we all live and die in his True Faith and Fear, holding fast this Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh.

To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost (that Unity in Trinity and that Trinity in Unity, which is to be worshipped) be Glory, as in all Churches of the Saints both now and evermore.

I am

Your Faithful Minister

and Servant in the Lord

HERBERT RANDOLPH.

MARK xiii. 23.

But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

THE Text I have chosen to discourse upon having been much mistaken by the Ignorance of some, and much perverted by the Artifice and Wickedness of others, I shall endeavour to clear up, and set you right in your Apprehensions of it; that it may not become the Occasion of Uneasiness and Perplexity of Thought to any who call themselves Christians, when they hear it urged, and perverted, thro' *the cunning Craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive*^a.

They who disbelieve all Revelation, and they who deny the *Divinity* of our *Saviour*, have, tho' with different Views, equally made use of, and catch'd at this Text, as much for their pur-

^a Eph. 4. 14.

pose; the Unbeliever, because he delights to find any thing that looks like a Contradiction in the Scripture; the Opposers of our Lord's Divinity, because it seems to bear hard upon the Omniscience of our *Saviour*.

For the Words are the Words of our *Saviour* himself, and hereby he very clearly signifies, that he was intirely ignorant of the Time of his coming and that — *Of that Day and Hour no one but the Father knew*. And yet in other places^a of the *New Testament*, it is as clearly asserted that he *knew all things*, that *in him were hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, that he not only *searcheth the Reins and the Heart of Man*, but was privy to the Counsels of *God*, and intimately acquainted with all things that *the Father* knew.

What a palpable Contradiction! cries the *Deist*: What a Proof that our *Saviour's* Knowledge was limited and finite! cries the *Arian*.

But, I hope, when the Words are sufficiently explain'd and the Sense of them made out, neither of these Infidels will have any reason to triumph. The *Omniscience* we ascribe to *Christ* stands safe, and the *Fullness of his Glorious Godhead* shines forth notwithstanding any thing that is said in my Text.

^a Joh. 21. 17. Col. 2. 3. Rev. 2. 23. Joh. 1. 18. — 10. 15. — 16. 15.

For in my Text he speaks of himself in his
 a human Capacity and hath no manner of Reference to his *Divine Nature*. From the Knowledge of his *Divine Nature* nothing can be conceal'd, from his *human Understanding* there might, if it pleased not the *Divine Nature* to communicate and impart it. *For the right Faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God is God and Man*. Now as *Man* he may be said to do what as *God* he could not do. He who came down from Heaven to deliver *Man*, took upon him our Nature with all its Imperfections and Infirmities. He was Born into the World, he Improved, he Grew, his Understanding as well as Stature was improveable, and received Strength. We know what St. *Luke* affirms that *Jesus increased in Wisdom, and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man* b. Now it is evident *Jesus* could not be said to grow in *Wisdom* if by Virtue of his Union with the *Divine Nature* he knew every thing from the first. The Knowledge of the *human Understanding* was limited, which was no Impeachment of the Omniscience of the *Divine*. *For us Men and for our Salvation* he submitted to all the Infirmities of

a Αἰνοῦν ἔφησεν οἰκονομικῶς ἀποσώζων τῇ ἀνθρώπων τῇ αὐτῇ περιστάσει τῶν. Cyril. Alex.

b Luke 2. 52.

our Nature, Sin only excepted; and consequently therefore he passed thro' all the Stages of helpless Infancy and tender Childhood in common with other Men. As Man, he by degrees arrived at Knowledge, his Capacity received Improvement with his Years. He was *twelve years old*, when, as the same *Evangelist* tells us, ^a he *waxed strong in Spirit*, and when *all that heard him were astonish'd at his Understanding and Answers*. We know too from the same Scriptures that he *Grieved*, he *Wept*, he *Suffer'd*, he *Bled*, he *Died*. Now how could all these things be, if the *Human Nature* was swallowed up in the *Divine*, and we confound what is said of the one, as if intended of the other? He was the *Son of Man* as well as the *Son of God*, and in him, who was *one Christ*, ^b each Nature, tho' united, was intire and distinct. We must ascribe therefore to the *Manhood* those things said of him in Scripture, which are incompatible with the *Godhead*. The *Godhead*, we know, could not grieve nor suffer neither could it be ignorant of any thing. But these Imperfections and Infirmities are true,

^a Luke 2. 42. — 40. — 47.

^b Salva proprietate utriusque Naturæ suscepta est a Majestate Humilitas, a virtute infirmitas, ab æternitate mortalitas.

Leo. Magn. ad Flav. Ep.

— ἐξουθενε γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον γνώσκοντες — ὁρῶντες πιστεύοντες

Athanas. Orat. c. Ar. 4. p. 487. Paris. Ed.

when

when spoken of the *Man Jesus*. For, tho' his *Humanity* was always Sanctified, and Dignified, with the conjunction of the *Divine Nature*, yet the *Divinity* did not always manifest, and exert itself with equal Fulness, but only in Proportion to the Exigencies of his Ministry. And because it was no part of his Ministry to inform Mankind of the precise Time of the last Judgment, therefore he declares that *this Day was known only to the Father*, and not communicated to him as the *Messiah*. What is here said of *the Son* relates to *the Son of Man* only; which is very plain, if we look back to the verses before, for there v. 26, he says, *Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds with great Power and Glory*: and here v. 32, he says, *But of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, (i. e. neither the Son of Man) but the Father*.

And the very next verse but one after the Text shews it to be intended in this sense; for v. 34 it is said expressly of the same Person in a continued Discourse, *The Son of Man is as a Man taking a far Journey* — Does he not here therefore plainly speak of his *Human Nature*? in which Capacity tho' he never wanted the Assistance of the *Divine Power* to enable him to do whatever he saw fit, yet it was not fit, that either

ther he should know, or communicate that Knowledge to Mankind, (which was no part of his Office to perform) the exact Time, Day, and Hour, of the last Judgment. As he had assumed a Body of human Substance, and was in that Body to finish the Work that was given him to do, he might disclaim any thing out of the reach of human Knowledge, and yet not in the least derogate from the Omniscience of the Divine. As *God* he perfectly knew, what as *Man*, as the *Messiah*, as the *Messenger of God*, he did not know, nor had any Commission to impart.

To confirm still further the Exposition we have given, it may be of use to us to observe that while our *Saviour* conversed here upon Earth, he did not ordinarily speak to his Disciples, nor thought proper to ^a manifest to them the Glories of the *Divine Nature* hid under that *Veil of Flesh*; nor did the *Divine Nature*, tho' so closely united to the *Human*, at all ^b Times, and upon all Occasions, communicate its Influence to the *Manhood*, or fully impart to it its

^a His *Transfiguration* which was the most glorious manifestation of himself, he commands his three Disciples to *tell no Man of till after he was risen*. Matt. 17. 9.

^b Quippe Divinam Sapientiam menti humanæ Christi affectus suos impressisse pro temporum ratione &c.

Bull. Def. Fid. Nic. Sect. 2. c. 5.

powerful Virtue and Efficacy, but at certain Seasons, and upon particular Occasions. It is plain the *Manhood* was left to act by itself, ^a when he was tempted of the *Devil*, when in his Agony in the Garden, when he was crucified, when he suffer'd, when he died. In all these Instances the *Divine Nature* withdrew its Intercourse, suspended its Almighty Power, did not supply, or communicate its Strength. And if in those cases the Influence of the *Deity* was withheld, why not in that of Knowledge? at least, in that particular Act of Knowledge, reserved only for Infinity itself? Our *Saviour*, while on Earth, was the Messenger of his *Fathers* Will, he was *anointed with the Holy Ghost and with Power*, ^b to give knowledge of Salvation to his People, thro' the tender Mercy of God: ^c As he tells the Jews, *he spake nothing of himself, but the Father which sent him, he gave him Commandment what he should say and what he should speak.* ^d It was no Part of his Mission to declare to his Disciples, nor was it

a — Ηουχαζοντες μιν τῷ λόγῳ ἐν τῷ περιέλειπαι καὶ ἀπμείλει καὶ συζητεῖν καὶ διατηροῦν &c.

Irenæus L. 3. c. 21. p. 250. cura Grabe.

Ωστε ὃ ἢ ἄνθρωπος ἵνα περιελεῖται, ἔτω καὶ λόγος ἵνα διελεῖται. *ibid.*
supra. Vide & Euseb. Dem. Evang. L. 4. c. 13.

b Acts 10. 38.

c Luke 1. 77. — 78.

d Joh. 12. 49.

necessary or convenient to them *to know the Times or the Seasons which the Father hath put in his own Power.*^a In the Verses before my Text he had open'd to them many future things, but the precise time of his second Coming, the Day and Hour of his last Judgment, he was not to acquaint them with. It was a Secret that belonged only unto God, and he, tho' a Teacher sent from God, was not to declare it to them, neither did he know it.^b To put an end to all further Enquiry, he plainly tells them he was not empower'd to make any such Discovery, neither was the Knowledge of it imparted to him. This was evidently his Meaning, and in this Sense no doubt his Disciples understood him. For tho' *they trusted it was He that should have redeem'd Israel*, they had no clear Apprehensions of his intimate Union with the Divine Nature, till after he was risen. In his whole Discourse to them in this Chapter he calls himself the *Son of Man*; when he said therefore *of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels, neither the Son*, they must necessarily understand him of the *Son of Man*, of that *Son of man*, who in his hu-

^a Acts I. 7.

^b — ἀπάγει αὐτοὺς ὅπως τοῦ ζητῆν, μὴ οὐδ' ἀγγέλων αὐτῶ.
Theophylact.

man Capacity was then speaking and conversing with them.

I think by this Time it must be evident to us all, that, when our *Saviour* denies his *Knowledge of the Day of Judgment*, he speaks in relation to his *human Nature*, to that *human Nature* to which ^a Ignorance and Infirmary belongs, and not in relation to that all-perfect Nature, whose Knowledge and whose Wisdom is infinite. At the Time of his Incarnation, when he took upon him our Flesh, his Soul was like that of other Mens. ^b The Union of the *Divine Nature* did not impart to the *Human*, either infinite Knowledge, or any other Attributes peculiar to the Godhead, neither indeed was it possible it should. Where then is the Difficulty of saying that he, who passed thro' Infancy, and Childhood, and grew and improved in Knowledge, and, as to his human Soul, no less than his human Flesh, *increased in Wisdom and Stature*, should as *Man*, be ignorant of a Thing, which; as *God*, he perfectly knew?

a — ὁ ἀνθρώπινος ἐν φύσει ἴδιον ἔ τὸ ἀγνοῦν. Athanas. Orat. in Ar. 4. — ἂν γὰρ καὶ πάντα λίσσεται ἡμῖν ὁμοῖος, ἀγνοῦμαι δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς, δηλονότι καὶ αὐτὸς ἡγνεί. Leontius Byzant. de Sectis.

b Whatsoever is natural to Deity the same remaineth in Christ uncommunicated to his Manhood: and whatsoever is natural to Manhood, his Deity thereof is incapable &c. Hooker Eccles. Pol. L. 5. §. 53.

But the Sleight and Artifice of the Adversary is such, as to form a Kind of Argument and Objection even from the Order and Ranging of the Words; they spy out a regular Climax and Gradation in them, ascending, and gradually rising from the lowest Order of intelligent Beings to the highest — *Of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man* — then it proceeds a Step higher — *no; not the Angels which are in Heaven* — then, *neither the Son* — who is placed, we see, above the *Angels*, and next unto the *Father*.

Now every common Understanding must see, that this is a poor Pretence, a very slight and weak Foundation to rest a Point of such Weight upon. For, what if there were no such Gradation intended, and it should appear at last to be a mere fanciful Chimera of their own? Or, which must silence them at once, what wonder may we say, if the Son of Man, whom Angels minister'd unto, should be placed above them, and be mention'd as superior to them?

But to wave these Answers, (which are fully sufficient to the purpose) let us hear what the great *Athanasius* said in reply to this Objection. For you are to understand, it is no new Cavil just now started, which they urge and vehemently press upon us, as if it were a Difficulty of their
own

own making. ^a No; it is the very same Pretence which the Arians made Use of fourteen hundred Years ago against the true Faith, and which the learned Pen of Athanasius fourteen hundred Years ago thus answer'd ^b.

If it be demanded why he told them the Son did not know this Thing which at the same Time was not unknown to the Son of God; — Every well instructed Christian is provided with a Reply, that he only declared he knew it not as Man, or by the Faculties of his human Nature^c. — And 'tis observable, says he, ^d He does not say, No, not the Angels, neither the Son of God, which might seem to imply Ignorance in the Divinity, ^e but barely neither the Son; which plainly shews that the Son here meant is the Son of Man, and that this Instance of Ignorance concerns him only.

And then he goes on — *And were not this the Meaning of the Place, says he, after he had confess'd himself jointly ignorant with the Angels, no*

^a Tis a strange Thing that Men should desire to distinguish themselves by reviving old Heresies, and that too, without being able to produce any new Proofs for them — Fiddes Sermon on Joh. 3. 16.

^b Athanas. Tom. 1. Orat. c. Arianos 4. Paris. Edit. p. 494.

^c — διὰ τὴν σάρκα ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἔλεγεν.

^d P. 495.

^e — ἵνα μὴ ἡ θεότης ἀγνοῦται φαίνεται· ἀλλὰ ἀπλῶς.

doubt he would have added likewise the *Holy Ghost*; and from his not doing this, two Conclusions naturally arise; First that the *Holy Spirit* knew this Day and Hour, and consequently the Son, from whom the *Holy Ghost* proceeds, could not but know it; and Secondly that the Son here was the Son of Man, and not intended to be set forth as the Son of God, for if he had, the *Holy Ghost* had certainly been mention'd too.

And now what becomes of their fine Gradation, the Climax rising and ascending Step by Step? For to preserve it in their Sense, after the *Angels*, the next Ascent must have been to the *Holy Ghost*. But, as *Atbanasius* well observes, after our Lord had mention'd the *Angels* as not knowing of that Day, he did not add — neither the *Holy Ghost*, that it might be reasonably concluded, that if the *Holy Ghost* knew the Day, most certainly also the Son of God must know it, and that therefore consequently what is here said of the Son relates to the Son of Man only. The *Holy Spirit* is not reckon'd in this Gradation as ignorant, and if he knew it, the Son, even upon *Arian* Maxims, must be believed to know it, as well as he. Let the Sagacity of an *Arian* if he can, find out a Solution for this.

As for us, saith ^a the great Athanasius, ^b we not only are called, but are truly Christians. Let our Adversaries mark what I say; we are Christians, and we make it our Business, according to our Profession and Duty, to inform ourselves and others of the reasonable and right Meaning of whatever Places of Scripture relate to the Person of our blessed Lord. And when we find him asserting the Divinity and Eternity of his Nature, we do not think it becomes us to take up Stones, with the Jews, to throw at him ^c, nor from those lowly Properties and general Defects of human Nature, which are ascribed to him, to raise Objections against the Truth of his Divine ^d, nor be offended, if he who became

^a P. 480.

^b Athanasius in the Place cited reproaches the Arians with Judaizing, and emphatically Stiles them the Disciples of Caiaphas, because enraged, as he was, that Christ being a Man should make himself God. And 'tis remarkable that this was a common and usual reproach cast upon all those who any way opposed or undermined the true and proper Divinity of our Saviour long before Arius had a being; as we find in the ancient Writers of the Christian Church. Thus Tertullian *adv. Praxeam. Judaica Fidei est res, sic unum Deum credere, ut Filium adnumerare ei nolis, & post Filium Spiritum.* & Novatian. *Ignari & imperiti Judæi b. redes sibi Hæreticos istos reddiderunt.* & Cyprian *Ep. 73,* and still earlier Ignatius and Justin M. The Judaism they charged such Hereticks with was the Denial of Christ's real and proper Divinity, and detracting from his eternal Power and Godhead.

^c Joh. 8. 58.

^d — μήτι μὴδ' ὑμῶν σκανδαλίζονται ἐφ' οἷς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὡς ἡμεῖς πτανοῖς φεγγόμεθα ἡμεῖς.

Man

Man for our Sakes speaks humbly of himself in the Condition of a Man.

Would ye then, ^a O ye Worshippers of Arius, return to the Christian Faith, put away his Rage and his Blasphemy, shake off this obstinate Delusion, purge your Ears from the Mire and Filth of this Herefy and hearken to the Words of Truth and Sobriety. Cleanse your Hands ye Sinners and purify your Hearts ye double minded. The Light of Truth will then shine forth into your Minds and overcome the Mists of Ignorance and Error.

After this Manner did *Athanasius* address himself to the *Arians* of his Time, powerfully confuting their Arguments, and baffling every Artifice and Evasion, particularly that Difficulty which they started, and that Gradation they were so fond of spying out in my Text.

And now, having, as I hope, sufficiently explained it, and given a clear Solution of the Difficulty, by shewing, that the Ignorance here spoken of by our Saviour, must be ascribed to him as Man, and that his Disciples could understand him in no other Sense, at the Time when he spake these Words, I shall barely observe two Things from hence and so conclude. First as to the easie Solution of the Objection, and Secondly as to the Uncertainty and Ignorance we are

in of the precise Time of the Day of Judgment.

First as to the easie Solution or the pretended Difficulty in my Text; methinks it might serve to satisfy any one not only of the Weakness of the Objection urged, and how wildly and impertinently our Adversaries talk, but lead us to conclude that those Texts which they produce out of Scripture are as weakly applied, and as little to the Purpose as this. It is not to be expected that common Christians should be expert Disputants in Controversies of Faith any more than that they should be profound Casuists in relation to Practice. In Matters of this Kind they may not always be able to produce the Scripture on which 'tis founded, or shew the Strength and Sufficiency of the Support. But every plain Man that can read the Gospel must see that *Christ came down from Heaven*, that *the Word was made Flesh*^a, that *in the Beginning was this Word*, and *this Word was God*^b; he must hear this *Saviour of the World*, this *only begotten Son*, which *was in the Bosom of the Father*^c, distinguishing Three Persons in the Godhead, and commanding his Disciples to *baptize all Nations, in the*

^a Joh. 1. 14.

^b ——— 1.

^c ——— 18.

Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost^a.

Let every plain Christian therefore keep in that Faith in which he was baptized, adhere to what our Saviour teaches, and take it as an Anchor of the Soul both sure and stedfast, without being tofs'd to and fro, and carried about with *the profane and vain Babblings* of the Adversary. We see they throw in a Difficulty or two with an Intent to deceive, but no other than what have been fully consider'd and answer'd above a thousand Years ago. We may take it for granted that whatever they urge is of the same Kind, some pitiful and stale Artifice, detected and confuted over and over, and therefore let us stick to the plain Words, and indeed to the whole Tenour and Analogy of Scripture. Which Rule and Track of Belief had our Adversaries followed, they could not have wander'd so widely from the Way of Truth, nor have made their *God and Saviour, a Stone of stumbling, and Rock of Offence.*

The second Observation I am to make to you, is concerning the Uncertainty and Ignorance we are in of the precise Time of *the Day of Judgment.*

It is not for Man to know it: it hath pleased

^a Matt. 28. 19.

God to reserve this Knowledge to himself. And we may assuredly gather from thence, that it is not necessary, it is not expedient we should know it. Had it been best for us to have known the precise Time of that *great and terrible Day of the Lord*, no doubt but the same Divine Goodness which gave us the Knowledge of his Will, and revealed to us the deep Things of *God*, would have instructed us in this likewise. Instead of that, he hath made it an impenetrable Secret. No doubt for our Benefit, and with a View to our good; that the Uncertainty of it may awaken our Vigilance and Concern, and we may be always in a Readiness, and prepared for it.

Let us then make that Use of this awful Truth which is so natural and just a Conclusion, and which our Saviour instructs us to do in the very Words following my Text. *Take ye heed, saith he, watch and pray; for ye know not when the Time is.*

A P P E N D I X.

Gentlemen,

Between the Time of your applying to me to print this Sermon and my transcribing it for the Press, I consulted, as they came in my Way, some of the most learned Expositors, and eminent Divines of our Church, that had either professedly, or occasionally, given their Sense of my Text. And I found them so unanimously consenting and agreeing in the Interpretation I have given, that I thought it not improper to present them thus collected together for your View, and placed in such an Order, as seem'd to me most likely to illustrate their mutual Agreement and Support of each other.

Expositions of *Mark 13. 2.*

But howsoever, I have given you many Presages and certain Foretokens of that great Day; yet, the particular Time and Hour thereof is so reserv'd in the

the

the secret Counsel of God the Father, as that the blessed Angels of Heaven know it not : no, the very Son of Man, as he is Man, bath it not disclosed to him.

Bp. Hall's Explication of hard Texts p. 67.

But of the Point of Time, when this shall be, no created Understanding knows, no, not Christ himself according to his human Nature. Dr. Hammond.

But of the precise Day and Hour — 'tis not known to any created Being ; no not to the Son himself [as he is the Son of Man ; 'tis no Part of his Prophetick Office, no Revelation to be made by him] but a proper and peculiar Object of the Divine Prescience. W. Reading Evang. Hist. p. 301.

Tho', as God, he could not be ignorant of any Thing, yet his human Understanding did not know it. And it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the Divine Wisdom, which dwelt in our Saviour, did communicate itself to his human Soul according to his Pleasure ; and so his human Nature might at some Times not know some Things.

Arch-Bp. Tillotson Sermon. Fol. 3. p. 171.

Our Lord confesses himself ignorant — he was so in Respect to his human Nature, wherein he is said to have increased in Wisdom and Stature like other Men. Fiddes Sermon. Fol. p. 6.

It must be granted, that, as Man, he did not know beyond the Capacities of an human and finite

Understanding; and not what he knew, as God. He could not be supposed to know in this respect things not knowable by Man, any otherwise, than as the Divine Nature and Wisdom thought fit to communicate and impart such Knowledge to him.

Bp. Kidder of the Messiah Part 2. p. 60.

It is one Thing to understand the Son of God barely and abstractedly for the Second Person in the Holy Trinity; another to understand him for the Messiah, or the Second Person Incarnate. To say that the Second Person in the Trinity knows not something is blasphemous; to say so of the Messiah is not so, who nevertheless was the same with the Second Person in the Trinity. For although the Second Person abstractedly consider'd according to his mere Deity, was co-equal with the Father co-omnipotent, co-omniscient, co-eternal with him &c. yet Messiah who was God-man, consider'd as Messiah, was a Servant, and a Messenger of the Father, and received Commands and Authority from the Father. And those Expressions — The Son can do nothing of himself &c. will not in the least serve the Arians Turn &c. Dr. Lightfoot.

The whole Passage is too long to transcribe: but Dr. Whitby makes Use of it, and, from what he says, draws this Conclusion, that Christ's Foreknowledge of Things to come, of which the Discourse here is, is to be number'd among those Things which

which flowed from the Anointing of the Holy Ghost, and from his immediate Revelation; not from the Hypostatic Union of the two Natures.

Whitby Annot.

After all that hath been said, the most simple, genuine and satisfactory Decision of the words is this, Christ knew not the Day of Judgment as he was Man, tho' as God he did. — So that the Result of the whole is this, that the Distinction of the Two Natures in Christ is the best Solution of the Difficulty before us. Edwards Exercit. p. 237.

You see here the venerable Names of Men in our Church, esteem'd for their Judgment, distinguish'd for their Piety and Learning, most of them the Glory of their Times in which they lived, all of them consenting in the same Interpretation I have given. I must own it is a Comfort to me, and I hope it will prove an additional Satisfaction to you, to find that Uniformity of Agreement there is between us, and a convincing Proof that the Doctrine I have preached is the Doctrine of the Church of England. For, I may well apply to our Church, ^a what a justly celebrated Writer says of the Primitive one, "*I am, and always shall be religiously scrupulous of interpreting Scripture contrary to the Stream of Antiquity, unless upon*

^a Bp. Bull.

"very

*“very clear and cogent Arguments against it, a
“Case which I believe will never happen. The A-
“greement, the consenting Judgment of Primitive
“Antiquity ought certainly to outweigh a multitude
“of Probabilities and plausible Reasonings that
“may be insinuated to the contrary. — This I say,
I shall beg leave to apply to our Church: And
why? because the Doctrine of our Church is the
Doctrine of the Primitive one. It is no other,
than what was taught and believed in from the
Beginning. It is the Rock upon which our Re-
form’d Church is built, and that Rock is Christ.
An Unanimity of Doctrine, in regard to that
Point I am defending, in all the Churches, how-
ever widely distant in point of Time or Situation
from each other, and their Abhorrence and Con-
demnation of every Heresy that arose in Contra-
diction to it, is a most convincing Argument,
that it had been from the Beginning. Their Wri-
tings that are come down to us all of them im-
ply or expressly affirm what was their general
Sense in this Matter. And the general Tradition
of the Church, as Arch-Bp. Tillotson pronounces,
is the best and surest Confirmation of this great
Point now in Question between us; and that which
gives us the greatest and truest Light for the right
Understanding of the true Sense and Meaning of
Scripture,*

Scripture, not only in this, but in most other important Doctrines of the Christian Religion.

Tillotson's Serm. Vol. 1. p. 530. Fol. Edit.

This is a Proof indeed that cannot be made out to Advantage, or be understood in it's full Force by you, whose several Occupations and Employments must necessarily render you unskill'd in Antiquity, and unknowing of those learned Languages, which convey the Sense of it down to us. And yet, I doubt not, after I have sufficiently proved the true and proper Divinity of our Saviour from undeniable Testimonies of Holy Writ, but I shall be able to make you sensible of the Weight of this Evidence, that it has been the Belief of the Catholick Church successively from Age to Age, even to this Day; and that 'tis an unsurmountable Objection to any Thing now alledg'd to you out of Scripture, especially if it be concerning a fundamental Article of our Faith, should it be found contrary to the Sense of the whole Catholick Church from the Beginning.

This, I say; the Conformity of our Doctrine to that of the Primitive Church I doubt not but in due Time to make out plain and clear to you. In the mean while you have in your own Tongue those Testimonies of the Belief of the Christian Church in the earliest Ages of it, the Three
Creeds,

Creeds, that are in our Liturgy, Testimonies in themselves so evident and strong, that our Adversaries whole Bent is to destroy their Evidence, and cast away these Cords from them. But tho' they thus furiously rage together against the Lord and against his Christ; He that sitteth in Heaven shall laugh them to Scorn, the Lord shall have them in Derision.

FINIS.

